

A Sad State of Affairs

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M.A. Lanoue

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By M.A. Lanoue

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A Sad State of Affairs - 3rd Draft**EXT. INTERSECTION OF TWO GRAVEL ROADS--DAY**

THE GUY, a fellow around thirty years of age, stands in the middle of the intersection with a jar labeled "Tips." He is wearing a suit and tie, with a hat on, and his presence in the middle of two country roads makes no sense at all.

A brief montage shows him standing there all day long without seeing a single car pass him by.

Finally, one car approaches the intersection. It is driven by SANDRA, a young, professionally dressed woman who also seems out of her element. She stops her car before the intersection to avoid hitting GUY. GUY waves the tip jar in front of her windshield, but SANDRA just looks straight ahead, avoiding eye contact with him. GUY keeps shaking his tip jar as he makes his way over to the driver's side window. SANDRA grabs her cell phone and holds it up to her ear, clearly not talking to anybody, but hoping to look busy. GUY shakes the jar in front of the window a few more times, then gives up and steps back from the car. SANDRA drives off.

GUY watches the car disappear down the road with fascination.

GUY

Yowzah!

GUY walks over to the side of the road and picks up his duffel bag. He opens it up and puts the tip jar in it. Then he pulls out a small inexpensive mp3 player connected to enormous old headphones. He puts on the headphones and begins listening to Anna Chandler's 1914 recording of "I Want Everyone to Love Me" as he pulls his bike out of the ditch and begins to ride off in the same direction as the car.

As he rides, he sings the chorus with great enthusiasm. The credits roll while he sings.

GUY (CONT'D)

I want everyone to love me.

*Hurry honey, cuddle near me.
Goodness gracious, can't you hear me?
I want everyone to love me.
La la la la la la la la.
'Cause my heart is so revealing*

*Put your lovin' arms around me.
Hold me dear, just like a turtle dove!
La la la la la onic
Doctor says I need a tonic.
I want everyone to love me!*

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

As the song finishes, THE GUY rides his bike into the parking lot of the Park Motel, an old-fashioned single-story roadside motel with a big sign and front court and outside doors to the rooms. He parks his bike in a parking space in front of his room. As he steps away from his bike, he notices SANDRA's car parked right next to him—and he does a double-take.

GUY looks at the car and then up at the motel room next to his. Inaudibly, he says:

GUY

Yowzah.

GUY saunters up to his room's door, but keeps looking over at SANDRA's room. He tries to peek in the window, but has to redirect himself when somebody walks past him on the sidewalk. Finally, GUY gets out his key and opens his own door and goes inside. A few seconds later he opens his door and peeks out again. He shuts the door.

A few seconds after that, SANDRA opens the door to her room and walks out with a purpose. Instantly, GUY opens his door and steps out. SANDRA heads to her car and opens the trunk. GUY never steps off the porch. He tries a few awkward smiles and then tries to lean against the door frame as if he were cool. SANDRA pulls out a small briefcase, shuts the trunk and walks back in—without ever looking at GUY.

INT. GUY'S ROOM -- EVENING

GUY retreats to his room. He decides to make a lot of noise. He starts dropping coins on the table. He pulls

a tire pump out of his duffel bag and cups his hand over the end of the hose. As he pumps, it makes noise, too.

INT. SANDRA'S ROOM - EVENING

Meanwhile, SANDRA is at her desk working on her laptop with a stack of papers. She hears nothing.

INT. GUY'S ROOM - EVENING

Guy is now tap dancing (or at least trying to) in the bathtub. It's pretty loud in his bathroom.

INT. SANDRA'S ROOM - EVENING

She hears no noise, and has no idea what is going on next door.

INT. GUY'S ROOM - EVENING

Guy is now tap dancing on the table in his room with the tire pump. He jumps onto his bed and falls back.

INT. SANDRA'S ROOM -EVENING

Sandra is done with her work. She stretches and falls back onto her bed. She tosses a stack of papers in the air and lets them fall down on her.

INT. GUY'S ROOM - EVENING

Guy is still on his bed with the tire pump. He pumps out a little bit of air every now and then, treating the pump like it's a puppet.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MOTEL ROOMS - NIGHT

SANDRA steps out of her room with an ice bucket. GUY immediately follows her all the way to the ice machine without being noticed. He mimics her steps exactly, walking in sync with her, but several steps behind. SANDRA gets to the ice machine. GUY slips around to watch her from the other side. He feels compelled to break into a song.

GUY

*If I could read between the lines
I'd notice all the signs
And know just what to do.*

*You give a hint--and I give two
But we don't follow through
So, I don't have a clue.*

*I never say much.
My words don't weigh much.
But, I've got thoughts on you.*

*And, if we ever choose to speak
We'll chatter for a week.
And know just what to do.*

Again, SANDRA seems to not notice him at all. He follows her back from the machine, and she unknowingly slams the door to her room in his face.

GUY stands in the parking lot perplexed. For a few seconds, he feels dejected. He turns and faces the parking lot, however, and is immediately inspired. He steps down to Sandra's car and proceeds to let all the air out of her tires.

Then, he goes back into his room.

FADE OUT

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT--MORNING

SANDRA is standing in front of her car with a stunned look on her face.

SANDRA
(Quietly to herself.)
What the hell?

Immediately GUY pops out of his room. This time she notices him.

GUY
(Pretending to be surprised.)
Oh, hi. Anything the matter?

SANDRA steps down to her car. GUY steps down next to her.

SANDRA
My tires are all flat.

GUY
Gee whiz, that sucks. Any idea how it happened?

SANDRA scans the parking lot. GUY does too.

SANDRA

No! Does it look like anybody else's tires are flat?

GUY

Nah. Maybe one guy over there has one that's kind of low.

SANDRA

They don't look slashed, do they?

GUY.

No. Just completely deflated.

SANDRA

Arghhh!

SANDRA grabs her cell phone. She dials frantically and starts pacing around. While she talks, GUY runs into his room. By the time she hangs up, he has re-emerged and is carrying his duffel bag.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

(On phone.)

Connie? . . . Is anything going on? .
. . No, 'cause I'm not there yet. . .
. Right, I know. . . . What did they
s--. . . Yeah, okay. Okay. That's
fine. . . No, it's all my freaking
tires are flat and I'm still at this
motel. . . Yeah, I'm gonna call,
someone as soon as I hang up with
you, but listen--. . . Connie! . .
. Connie! . . . What time is that
thing? . . . That thing. . . With the
chamber guy. . . No! . . . For real,
he died? . . . So, I don't have to
reschedule! Thank God! . . . Yeah,
better send some flowers. . . Nice,
budget-conscience flowers, though,
okay? . . . Okay. . . I'll call you
in a little bit for an update. . .
. Right. . . Bye-bye.

She hangs up her phone and looks at GUY curiously.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Yes?

GUY hold up his duffel bag.

GUY

I have the solution to your problem
right in here.

SANDRA

Okay? Four new tires in there?

GUY

No, no, no, no, no, no, no! Your
tires are fine. They just need air.

SANDRA

And how do you know this?

GUY

(Grasping.)

I used to be a . . . tire examiner.

SANDRA

Uh-huh. So, what's your solution?

GUY opens up his duffel bag and pulls out . . . a rubber
chicken.

GUY

Ta-da! Whoops! That's not right, is
it? Let me try that again.

SANDRA lets out a long sigh. She turns her attention to
her phone and starts to punch in some numbers. GUY
reaches into the bag and pulls out a bicycle tire pump.

GUY (CON'T)

This is what I was looking for!
Here! Don't call somebody, please.

SANDRA

(Unimpressed with the bicycle pump.)
Are you joking?

GUY

Okay, the rubber chicken was a joke,
but this is real.

SANDRA

That thing'll take forever.

GUY

I don't care. I got nothing
important to do. . . Except for
rescuing stranded young ladies with
tire problems!

SANDRA

I DO have important things to do.

GUY

Fair enough. And, ma'am, it would be
an honor to help you go do those
important things. . . Give me a half
and hour and I'll save you hundreds
of dollars in towing fees, and it
will probably be faster anyway.

SANDRA

(After mulling it over.)

Okay, thank you. You're very kind.
But, if you don't mind, I'm going to
go back in to my room and take care
of some things.

GUY

Absolutely, you go and make yourself
comfortable!

GUY connects the pump to the rear passenger tire and
starts pumping.

SANDRA

Okay, thank you again.

SANDRA picks up her bags and heads back toward her room.
GUY watches her as she goes inside. As soon as she
closes the door, he stops pumping. He reaches into his
duffel bag and pulls out a joke book. He starts reading,
occasionally looking up toward the room.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT—ONE HOUR LATER/MORNING

SANDRA comes out of her room and looks around for GUY. As she moves over toward the passenger side, she sees him still pumping the rear passenger tire. GUY pretends not to notice her. He is whistling.

SANDRA

Excuse me!

GUY

Huh? Oh, hi there! Goin' great.

SANDRA

Goin' great? I don't think so. It's been an hour and you're on the same tire.

GUY

Where are you from? Your accent is fascinating.

SANDRA

I came here from the Ukraine with my parents a long time ago, but that's not the point. You said it would only take a half-hour and it's already been twice that long and you still have to finish that tire and three other tires as well.

GUY

Yeah. I guess I did underestimate. Sorry about that. But, it won't be long now.

SANDRA

I think I should call somebody.

GUY

No, look. Trust me on this. Small-town car mechanics are notorious rip-offs.

SANDRA

I'm from a small town and our mechanic is not a rip-off.

GUY

Okay, but he's not very entertaining,
is he?

SANDRA

I don't care if he's entertaining or
not.

GUY

Sure, but I can be entertaining and
helpful at the same time.

GUY takes off the tire pump and starts playing around
with it. He puts his hand over the nozzle and pumps
rhythmically, producing a small noise with his hand.
Eventually he is able to play a small tune with the pump.

GUY (CONT'D)

Huh? How about that?

SANDRA

That's very impressive. . . . I take
it you've been practicing that?

GUY

Yep. It's part of my act.

GUY puts the pump back on the back tire and starts
pumping.

SANDRA

You mean your "pick-up" act?

GUY

That is a good idea, but no. I mean
my vaudeville act.

SANDRA

Really.

GUY

Yeah.

SANDRA

Do they still have vaudeville shows
anywhere?

GUY

No.

SANDRA

So, how's it working out for you?

GUY

Well, it's hard.

SANDRA

I would imagine.

GUY

But, I don't need a theatre, do I?

SANDRA

I don't know. Do you?

GUY

Ask me if I'm performing anywhere.

SANDRA

Ask you that?

GUY

Yes.

SANDRA

Are you performing anywhere?

GUY

(Boldly.)

I'm performing everywhere!

(Beat.)

I'm performing right now.

SANDRA

I can see that. But, will you also
be pumping any tires today?

GUY

Yes, just give me a little more time.
I swear you'll be on your way.

SANDRA

Okay, but I do have to get going
eventually, you know.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT—MID DAY

SANDRA walks down to the car. GUY is now pumping up the
front passenger tire.

SANDRA

Okay, this is turning out a lot
different than I was led to believe.

GUY

Can't explain it. But, look, we're
almost halfway there.

SANDRA

Yeah.

GUY

Do you have to be somewhere?

SANDRA

I did.

GUY

Think of all the money you're saving.

SANDRA

Yes. I'm going to spend some of that
money right now on something to eat.
Can I get you anything?

GUY

Food? Gosh. . . Well, what's my
price range?

SANDRA

(Flustered.)

I don't know. I'm just going to that
grocery store across the street.

GUY looks over toward the store.

GUY

Hmm. Yeah. There's also a nice roast beef sandwich place about a half-mile south of here.

SANDRA

That sounds great, but I don't want to walk a half a mile.

GUY

No, but you could dr- Never mind.

SANDRA

So, what do you want?

GUY

Anything. Beef jerky, or . . . carrots. Or anything else you see. Actually, I'll have the exact same thing you have.

SANDRA

(Exasperated.)

Okay.

SANDRA walks away from the car toward the road. Once she is out of sight, GUY puts the pump down and picks up his joke book.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT—ONE HALF-HOUR LATER

SANDRA walks across the parking lot carrying two small grocery bags. As she gets closer to her room and the car, we begin to see GUY pumping the front passenger side—where he had been when she left. She looks over at him and shakes her head in disbelief, but continues up the sidewalk into her room without saying anything.

EXT. FRONT OF SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM—MID DAY

GUY and SANDRA are sitting on the sidewalk eating their sandwiches.

SANDRA

But, I'm not saving any money. I have to book this room for another night now because it's taking so long.

GUY

Oh, sheesh. You did? Wow. That's really, really terrible. I didn't know. I had no idea. I'm so sorry. You know what? I'll skip my lunch and just pump like mad. I'll get those tires inflated and you'll be on your way.

SANDRA

No, there's no point. I've already paid for the room. But, they HAVE to be done by tomorrow morning.

GUY

Absolutely. No problem at all. And, if you want your money back, I understand.

SANDRA

I haven't paid you any money.

GUY

Ha! That was funny I said that, though. Wasn't it?

SANDRA

(Thinking.)

No.

GUY

Oh.

They both resume eating.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT—EARLY AFTERNOON

GUY is back at work on the tires. This time he is pumping up the rear driver tire. He keeps trying to look in Sandra's motel window as he pumps.

INT. SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM—AFTERNOON

SANDRA is sitting at the table looking at her laptop while talking on her cell phone.

SANDRA

No, no. It's okay. I see it right here. . . Good. . . Then we're all set? . . . Perfect. . . No! Tell him no way. Never. . . Okay, great. Bye-by.

SANDRA hangs up her phone and dials another number.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Pam? . . . Hi. What was the register this morning?

(long beat)

Put Chrissy on, okay?

While she waits, SANDRA stands up and walks over to the other side of the room, where she picks up a plastic cup. She walks back over to the table and pulls a large paper bag toward her. It's a bag she had been carrying with the sandwiches back from the grocery store. She pulls a one gallon bottle of wine out of the bag and cracks it open. She pours herself a cup of wine and puts the lid back on the bottle.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Chrissy, what the register from this morning? . . . Thank you. . . Okay, bye.

She hangs up the phone and takes a big gulp of wine. Then she goes out the door.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT-AFTERNOON

SANDRA steps out of her room and walks towards the car. She doesn't see GUY anywhere. She walks along the driver side of the car and notices the tires are all inflated. As she reaches the driver's side trunk, GUY pops up from the passenger side of the trunk and surprises her.

GUY

Can I help you there, Miss?

SANDRA lets out a minor shriek, but quickly recomposes herself.

SANDRA

What's the matter with you?

GUY

Nothing's the matter. I was just being funny.

SANDRA

But, that wasn't funny.

GUY

Okay, it's a fail. But, at least I try. And I filled up your tires.

SANDRA

Yes, I see that. It took you three hours to fill up the first two and a half and hour to do the last two.

GUY

Yes. That has a quirky quality to it, don't you think?

SANDRA

I don't know what you're talking about.

GUY looks around the parking lot.

GUY

Let's discuss this elsewhere, shall we? I don't feel like giving away this material just yet.

SANDRA

Huh?

GUY motions that they walk. SANDRA and GUY both walk from their respective sides of the car toward the motel. They sit on the front sidewalk again, like when they had been eating sandwiches.

GUY

So, here's the thing—

SANDRA

Let me just say this first. Thank you for pumping up my tires. I know it isn't easy to do that. And, if

you let me get my purse, I'd like to
pay you for your help.

GUY
And, I say . . . no.

SANDRA
No?

GUY
No. I don't mind helping people. At
least a little bit.

SANDRA
Oh. Well, thank you.

GUY
You're welcome. But, I have a
serious, serious question for you.

SANDRA
You do?

GUY
Yes. And, to some extent your answer
will influence my entire future.

SANDRA buries her head.

SANDRA
Oh, God!

GUY pats her back.

GUY
No, it's okay. Never mind. I
promise it won't. Okay? How's that?

SANDRA sits back up.

SANDRA
All right, what's your question?

GUY

You saw me yesterday working for tips. And you didn't tip me. And, I'd like to know why.

SANDRA

I didn't see you yesterday. I've never seen you before this morning.

GUY

You did too see me yesterday. I was standing in the middle of an empty road with a tip jar and you completely ignored me.

SANDRA

(Remembering.)

Oh, yeah. Well, that was kind of weird.

GUY

How so?

SANDRA

Well, you weren't doing anything. You were just asking for money.

GUY

It was part of the performance.

SANDRA

There was no performance. You were standing in the middle of an empty road.

GUY

Exactly! That's what makes it funny. Asking for money on a busy corner is just plain old panhandling, but doing it at a deserted rural intersection is a novelty. And that kind of creative thinking deserves a tip. . . You just don't get it.

SANDRA

Did anybody else get it?

GUY

It was just you and one other guy
yesterday, so no. I'm hoping to
build my reputation by word of mouth.

SANDRA

I'm not sure it's gonna work, but you
go for it.

GUY sighs.

GUY

All right, so how about my tire
pumping? How was the entertainment
value of that?

SANDRA stands up.

SANDRA

I'm gonna go get some more wine. Can
I offer you a cup?

GUY

You can. . . And, I'll accept it.

Walking into her room.

SANDRA

Okay, then.

GUY

(To himself.)
Yowzah!

EXT.FRONT OF MOTEL ROOMS—LATE AFTERNOON

SANDRA and GUY are sitting on the sidewalk much like
before, but they've had a couple cups of wine now.

SANDRA

So, how long have you lived here?

GUY

(Counting in head.)
Three days.

SANDRA
(Surprised.)
Oh, you're not from here?

GUY
Nope.

SANDRA
Do you wander from town to town on
that bicycle?

GUY
Yep.

SANDRA
And you perform for tips everywhere
you go?

GUY
Yep.

SANDRA
Do you always stand in the middle of
empty intersections?

GUY
No, that was a new one I was trying
out.

SANDRA
And this is your way of bringing back
vaudeville?

GUY
That's right.

SANDRA
Is your family into vaudeville or
something?

GUY
No.

SANDRA
Do they know how you're going about
your profession?

GUY

Oh, sure.

SANDRA

How do they like it?

GUY

They're fine with it. Especially the part about me not doing it in their house anymore.

SANDRA

Ah.

GUY

It's not as crazy as it sounds. So, I don't have theatres in little towns to perform in, or trains that will take me there. Big deal. What I do is, I live my life like I'm on stage twenty-four hours a day. I cheer people up wherever I go! And I get great practice for if I ever actually do get on a vaudeville stage.

SANDRA

Yeah, okay.

They both take a drink of wine then both of them slap themselves to kill mosquitoes.

INT. SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM—EARLY EVENING

SANDRA and GUY are sitting at the motel table. They're both staring into space.

SANDRA

(Breaking the silence.)

I'm sorry I didn't give you a tip yesterday.

GUY

Don't worry about it. It just proves I need to revise my act.

SANDRA

I think if more people knew it was an act, they would give you money. It was just hard to tell.

GUY

It's amazing how people just don't get things, isn't it?

SANDRA

It is amazing. Ninety percent of the population seems to be extremely stupid.

GUY

Yeah, I've noticed that, too.

SANDRA

Can you play any more songs on that tire pump? If you did that, people would get it, I think.

GUY

No, I can't. Just that one. And I don't know if that really counts, anyway.

SANDRA

Why not?

GUY

Mostly, because it sounds terrible. But also because I stole the idea from this guy in *The King of Jazz*.

SANDRA

What king is that?

GUY

It's a movie with Paul Whiteman's Orchestra. *The King of Jazz*.

SANDRA

Oh, I never saw it.

GUY

Well, it's pretty old. Made just
before vaudeville fell off a cliff
and was buried under the sea.
Waiting to be discovered and
resuscitated.

SANDRA

Yeah.

GUY

(With new-found enthusiasm.)
Okay, I've never told anybody about
this before, so I need you to promise
A—that you won't laugh at me because
I'm actually not joking right now and
B—that you won't tell anybody else
about it.

SANDRA puts her cup down and leans in toward GUY in a
confidential manner.

SANDRA

(Whispering.)

Okay!

GUY

(Quietly, but not whispering.)
I'm working on a plan.

SANDRA

Okay.

(Waits.)

What is it?

GUY

Well, so, as you know there isn't a
remaining viable vaudeville theatre
circuit anywhere on earth.

SANDRA

Right. . . Why'd you specify "earth?"

GUY

Well, it's true. I looked into it.

SANDRA

Okay.

GUY

Anyway, my plan is to eventually raise enough money to revive vaudeville theatres across the country and develop a nice little circuit for fellow vaudevillians to tour.

SANDRA

That sounds great. Are there other vaudevillians?

GUY

I don't know. But, I'm sure I'm going to inspire people to take it up, too, don't you think?

SANDRA

Absolutely.

GUY

Obviously, I don't have anywhere near enough money right now to actually do this.

SANDRA

How much would it take?

GUY

I don't know. But, I don't have any money, so I know it's not enough.

SANDRA

Right.

GUY

And, a lot of the theatres are gone now. Or they turned them into tanning salons or something.

SANDRA

Mmm-hmm. I think I know one, now
that you mention it.

GUY

Another problem is that I don't have
a clue how to run a theatre, let
alone a whole circuit.

SANDRA

I see the challenges you face.

GUY

So I have a Plan B. And, this is
probably the part where you're going
to laugh at me.

SANDRA

No, I won't.

GUY

Well, usually people laugh at Plan A
and I give up telling them, so I
can't imagine that you'll make it
through the whole thing.

SANDRA

Give it a try.

GUY

Okay. I'm also doing a lot of
research into time travel.

SANDRA

Okay.

GUY

If all else fails, I'll go back in
time and launch my vaudeville career
there.

SANDRA

Right.

GUY

You're not laughing.

SANDRA

No. Why?

GUY

You gotta admit, it is a really stupid idea.

SANDRA

I didn't say that.

GUY

But, it is a little far-fetched.

SANDRA

Maybe. I don't really know anything about time travel.

GUY

Me neither, that's what makes it so improbable.

SANDRA

I'm sure it's complicated.

GUY

It's really, really complicated.

SANDRA

Maybe you should switch 'em.

GUY

How?

SANDRA

Make Plan B Plan A, and Plan A Plan B. That way your back-up goal isn't more impossible to achieve than your original goal. See what I mean?

GUY

Yeah, that's a thought. But it's not as funny.

SANDRA

No, but at least you might have a chance of succeeding.

(Beat.)

Although in your case neither one
seems easy.

GUY

No, but opening up a vaudeville house
is technically easier because it
doesn't break all sorts of laws of
physics.

SANDRA

Okay! There you go.

They cling cups.

INT. NIGHT—SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM

The sun is going down. SANDRA is on the floor watching
TV. GUY is lying on the bed staring at the ceiling.

SANDRA

How the hell did it become nine
o'clock?

GUY

Did you really like my tire pump
song?

SANDRA

Yes, I really did.

GUY

Maybe I'll practice more and get
better at it.

SANDRA

I think you should.

GUY

I mean, I have no illusions about any
of this, you know?

SANDRA

Oh, sure.

GUY

Riding a bicycle everywhere may be like the eco-trendy thing to do in most situations and all, but it makes it hard to transport a trunk full of costumes and props from town to town.

SANDRA

Do you have a trunk full of costumes and props?

GUY

No, it's just a duffle bag right now. But, that doesn't matter. I can make a prop out of anything.

GUY looks over next to him and grabs a piece of paper.

GUY

See, like this paper. I can use it is a comical way.

SANDRA

I bet you can!

GUY takes a big gulp of wine and smacks his lips.

GUY

What kind of wine is this, anyway?

SANDRA

The cheapest I could find.

GUY

It's good.

SANDRA

Don't finish the whole gallon, okay? I don't know where the emergency room is in this town.

GUY

I do. No, wait. I don't.

GUY puts the paper over his face.

GUY

I can make a mask. See?

SANDRA

(Not looking.)

Oh, how cool!

GUY

And, I can make a helicopter.

GUY blows on the paper to make it float briefly.

GUY

Kinda.

GUY continues to blow on the paper, but doesn't say anything. SANDRA is still on the floor at the end of the bed watching the TV. After a period of quiet, she smiles and laughs a little. She tips her head back, as if to look at GUY still lying on the bed blowing on the paper. SANDRA reveals a slightly devilish look on her face. She turns around to face the end of the bed and pops her head up to look at GUY. He's blissfully unaware of anything but the paper that generally covers his head. With a brain awash in sin juice, SANDRA starts to rise up to the end of the bed and carefully climb on to it. She begins to slowly and quietly slink forward toward GUY and the paper. She reaches GUY and stops. GUY has pretty much abandoned his paper-blowing, but it still covers his face. He lifts the paper up momentarily to see what's going on. He sees SANDRA in front of him. They stare at each other for several seconds. Then, she happily pounces on him.

Fade Out

INT-MORNING-SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM

SANDRA is yelling at somebody on her cell phone in the bathroom as GUY wakes up. GUY sits up in bed. He is still wearing the shirt and tie he had on last night. He begins to look around the room in search of the bottom half of his clothing. SANDRA enters the room from the bathroom, still on the phone. While talking, she picks up GUY'S belt and pants and hands them to GUY.

SANDRA

No! . . . No! . . . Why would you do
that to me? . . . Yeah, we'll see
about that, won't we? . . . Screw it.
Do what you want.

SANDRA hangs up the phone in front of a surprised GUY.

SANDRA

Prick.

SANDRA turns to GUY and extends her hand to him like a
politician.

SANDRA

Hi--State Representative Sandra
Perchowznik! How are you?

They shake hands.

GUY

Uh. I'm fine.

SANDRA

Yeah? Great. Great.

Awkward silence.

SANDRA

Oh, I made you some coffee.

SANDRA grabs a nice-looking coffee cup.

GUY

Gosh, thanks.

(Confused.)

Was this cup in your room?

SANDRA

Oh, no. I always bring my own coffee
equipment when I'm on the road.

GUY

Oh, sure. Wow. It's good.

SANDRA

Thank you!

GUY

It's like professional-grade coffee.

SANDRA

Yeah, I also manage a coffee shop.

GUY

You do?

SANDRA

Absolutely.

GUY

But, you're in Congress, too?

SANDRA

The state legislature, actually. But that's only been for the past few months. Mostly I run a coffee shop.

GUY

Huh. Where?

SANDRA

I represent the 175th district.

GUY

Oh, good for you!

SANDRA

You don't know where that is, do you?

GUY

No, but, don't feel bad. I don't know where any districts are.

SANDRA

Okay, so, my district includes the towns of Abagail-

GUY

Uhh. I don't know that one.

SANDRA
How about Berker Siding?

GUY
Definitely not.

SANDRA
South Cumbria?

GUY
No, sorry. Is that around here?

SANDRA
They're nowhere near here.

GUY
Wow, a real state representative.

SANDRA
Yeah, it's probably not as impressive
as you're thinking.

GUY
So, do you have a lot of power?

SANDRA
Actually, I have no power. I'm at
the absolute bottom of the power
list. Sixteen year-old pages have
more power than I do.

GUY
Huh. What party are you in?

SANDRA
(Glances at him.)
What do you think?

GUY
(Pretending to understand.)
Oh, sure, of course. Are you
married?

SANDRA
Yes, I am.

GUY

And, are you doing state legislature stuff today?

SANDRA walks toward the bathroom.

SANDRA

I'm heading to the capitol in a few minutes. I have a Bio-Compatible Pesticide Subcommittee meeting at ten, and it's gonna take at least an hour to get there 'cause parking sucks.

GUY

That's cool. Hey, you're allowed to speed because you're a state official aren't you?

SANDRA comes out of the bathroom.

SANDRA

(Curiously.)

I don't know. Nobody told me about that.

GUY

Well, that's what I always heard. As long as you're on official business.

SANDRA

Oh, I hope so! Can you look that up for me? My laptop's in the bag over there on the table.

SANDRA goes back into the bathroom.

GUY

I'll check it out.

SANDRA

Thank you.

GUY gets out the laptop and stares at it. He puts it on the table and attempts to use it, but is somewhat of a

novice with computers. He keeps looking for the power button. Eventually, SANDRA comes back into the room.

SANDRA
What'd you find out?

GUY shuts the laptop quickly.

GUY
Umm. It looks like you probably can.

SANDRA
Yay! I wish someone had told me that before.

GUY
Yeah, that's a nice perk.

SANDRA
Friggin'-ay it is!

SANDRA walks back toward the bathroom. GUY puts the laptop back in the bag and hides it under the bed. He then walks over towards SANDRA.

GUY
So, are you all done here, then?

SANDRA
All done?

GUY
Are you checking out?

SANDRA
Yes, I have to be at the capitol all this week.

GUY
Oh, sure. Yeah. Me? I think I'm going to be here a little while longer.

SANDRA
A little while longer like through lunchtime, or like another day, or what do you mean?

GUY

Maybe another day or two.

SANDRA

This isn't a terrible place. The hotel down there by the capitol building is nicer, but in a way I'm starting to hate it. Just a bunch of politicians getting drunk and making fools of themselves.

GUY

So, can I put some bags in your car for you?

SANDRA

Oh, that's so sweet! Thank you! The one on the floor is ready, and the coffee equipment can just go in the box there. And, I'll be done with this one in a minute.

GUY

Got it.

GUY picks up a suitcase, grabs her keys from the table and heads for the door.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT--MORNING

GUY brings out SANDRA's bags and attempts to use the remote starter to open her trunk. When nothing happens, he opens the driver's door and reaches down for the manual pull. We hear a "thunk" right after he pulls it. GUY stands up, walks over to the car's hood and slams it shut. He goes back to the manual pull and pulls the one that actually pops the trunk. He walks to the back of the car and puts the bags in there.

SANDRA appears from the room and walks down to the car with her bag and a box of assorted coffee equipment.

GUY

Hey, I just came up with a pretty funny bit for packing up people's cars.

SANDRA, slightly concerned, peers into the trunk to make sure everything looks okay. GUY takes the bag and box from SANDRA and puts it in the trunk while talking.

SANDRA

Yeah? It doesn't require you to drop things, does it?

GUY

No, no. It's much more cerebral.

GUY slams the trunk.

GUY (CONT'D)

Well, I guess you're all set. Gee-whiz, I think I'm gonna miss you.

SANDRA takes GUY's hand and begins to pat it with her other hand to console him.

SANDRA

Well, it was really, really nice to meet you.

SANDRA heads over to the car door.

GUY

Yeah, and you, too.

SANDRA

And, thank you again for pumping up my tires.

GUY

You're welcome.

SANDRA

Good luck with your deserted intersection act.

GUY

Thanks. It needs some work, I'm it's getting there.

SANDRA

Oh, and it would be great if you didn't say much, or really anything

to anybody about anything of any sort that happened over the past twelve hours, okay? It could be problematic for me, and I don't need that kind of aggravation right now.

GUY

Sure. I don't normally talk much to, like, you know, people anyway.

SANDRA

Great! Good bye.

GUY

Goodbye.

SANDRA pulls the car out and drives off. He slowly strolls back toward the rooms. Both doors are closed. As he gets near SANDRA's room he looks down and sees the tire pump resting against the wall in between the two doors. He picks it up fondly.

GUY

Oh, tire pump! I hope my cunning plan works out.

INT. CAPITOL MEETING ROOM-DAY

SANDRA sits in a meeting room bored and slightly hung over. She hears the discussion taking place, but is mostly drawing spirals on her notepad.

INT. GUY'S MOTEL ROOM-DAY

GUY sits by his window and keeps looking out the curtains. He sees a maid pushing a cart as she approaches Sandra's room. He quickly walks away from the window and heads out the door.

EXT. FRONT OF SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM-DAY

SANDRA's door is open. The maid has pulled the cart barely inside the doorway. GUY approaches the doorway and peeks his head in.

GUY

Hello! Hello! Hi!

(Beat.)

How would you like to make an easy eighty-seven cents?

INT. DIFFERENT MEETING ROOM-DAY

SANDRA is sitting in another meeting room staring into space. She checks her cell phone. She tries to hide a yawn.

EXT. FRONT OF SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM-DAY

GUY is talking to the young maid, who is standing on the inside of the doorway. She looks confused.

GUY

No, no, no. What I mean is—either way. You choose. Just don't clean the room, or clean the room really slowly. Make it take a long time.

The maid still stares at him confused.

Look, I've got stuff to do. If I come back here, and this room is all clean, you're not getting your money.

(Beat.)

Or . . . you can clean the room, but tell your boss it isn't clean. How'd that be?

(Beat.)

Bottom line—I don't want anybody else checking in here. Can you make that happen for me, please?

The maid salutes him. He salutes her back.

EXT-DAY-SANDRA'S CAR ON THE STREET--DAY

SANDRA is feverishly looking in her back seat for her laptop. Rep. GRESHAM sees her from across the street and yells to her.

GRESHAM

Sandra!

SANDRA closes her eyes and tries to wish Rep. GRESHAM away, but he crosses the street and approaches her.

GRESHAM (CONT'D)

Hey, I've been looking for you.

SANDRA

Oh really? I'm just looking for my laptop.

GRESHAM

Where were you yesterday?

SANDRA

All my tires were flat.

GRESHAM

All your tires?

SANDRA

Yeah, didn't what's-her-name tell you?

GRESHAM

Denise?

SANDRA

Yeah, Denise.

GRESHAM

No.

SANDRA

Well, I called Connie and told her to tell Denise to tell you and whoever else needed to know.

GRESHAM

It's just a little early in your career to be missing committee meetings, that's all.

SANDRA

Well, you'll be happy to know I went to two of them today.

GRESHAM

Great.

SANDRA gets in the car.

SANDRA

I suppose Lionel told you about the phone call I had with him this morning.

GRESHAM

Yes, he did.

SANDRA

Sorry about that. At least he didn't hear what I said after I hung up.

GRESHAM

Yeah. Look, it's a little early in your political career to be going off on staffers like that, too.

SANDRA

I know; I'm disappointed in myself. I come from a service industry background so I don't usually scream at people like that--except for a couple of times.

GRESHAM

Everyone's got their own style. You'll have to work it out.

SANDRA

Okay. So why don't YOU tell me why you're backing off Stuff's Law all of a sudden.

GRESHAM

(Sighs.)

Alright, hang on.

Rep. GRESHAM walks around to the passenger side of the car. SANDRA rolls down the passenger window.

GRESHAM (CONT'D)

May I?

SANDRA

Sure.

Rep. GRESHAM opens the car door and gets in.

GRESHAM

Look. I know you're excited about your first bill. Everybody always is--and that's great. And, I'd love to help you get your first bill passed, but--c'mon, really? This?

SANDRA

What?

GRESHAM

You don't want to spend what little "new-girl-in-town goodwill" you have left on headlights in drive-thrus?

SANDRA

Yes I do.

GRESHAM

Sandra, nobody understands it.

SANDRA

I believe the term is "feel-good" legislation.

GRESHAM

Doesn't really qualify.

SANDRA

I think it does. You can look it up on Wikipedia.

GRESHAM

You know, I was going to help you by helping you, but now I think instead I'm going to help you by not helping you. Does that make sense?

SANDRA

No! You pushed it through your committee and now you'll let it just die? Just like the real Stuffy!

GRESHAM

I was trying to be encouraging. Lot
of bill die unfortunate deaths.
You'll have to learn it sometime.

SANDRA

Oh, how nice of you!

GRESHAM

Actually, I'm saving you from a
humiliating defeat on the floor.

SANDRA

That's not true.

GRESHAM

The Speaker couldn't care less about
Stumpy's Law. And, if he doesn't
care, nothing's gonna happen.

SANDRA

Stuffy-his name was Stuffy.

GRESHAM

Yeah. Okay. But, the bill's not
about taxes or schools, or roads.
It's not eco-friendly--if anything
it's gonna cause more light
pollution. Everyone would hate it,
including the cops--and you don't want
them to hate you.

SANDRA

But, it will generate revenue. You
know it's true.

GRESHAM

Sure, for a few weeks. Then people
will start to figure it out, and the
cops who haven't gotten carpal tunnel
writing out tickets will decide
they've got more important things to
do than patrol fast food parking
lots.

SANDRA

We'll always be able to nab out-of-state folks who stop off the interstates. It'd be like speed traps.

GRESHAM

You're turning a little bit evil!

SANDRA

I'm trying to think like a politician. It's starting to work, isn't it?

GRESHAM

Maybe.

(Thinks.)

Alright, I'll talk to the Speaker's office. You can read it on the floor tomorrow.

SANDRA

Tomorrow? Oh, jeez.

GRESHAM

Do you want this thing or not?

SANDRA

Yes! Yes! Thank you!

GRESHAM opens the car door and gets out. He pauses.

GRESHAM

You'll have to talk really fast.

SANDRA

I can do that.

GRESHAM

And, you know nobody's going to be paying attention to anything you say, right?

SANDRA

Yeah, I know how it works.

GRESHAM

All right. One more thing. I'm going to need your vote on twenty-eight thirty-one.

SANDRA

Sorry, can't talk now!

GRESHAM

Sandra!

SANDRA

I got a lot to do. We'll talk about it another time.

SANDRA starts the engine. She rolls up the windows and pulls the car out into the street. She drives away.

INT-GROCERY STORE CONVEYOR BELT--AFTERNOON

GUY sets two packs of ramen and one large summer sausage on a check-out counter. He then opens a bag full of change and gently pours it out onto the counter.

EXT. HIGHWAY--AFTERNOON

Shot of SANDRA driving on a highway.

INT. SANDRA'S CAR--AFTERNOON

SANDRA is driving. She reaches for her cell phone and dials directory assistance. She waits for a response.

SANDRA

I don't know the name of the town.

(Waits.)

It's a motel. The name is, um. I don't know.

(Pause.)

It's right on Highway 13. No, I guess it was 22.

(Pause.)

Well, you're no help.

(Pause.)

You're not even going to try?

INT. GUY'S MOTEL ROOM--LATE AFTERNOON

GUY is cooking ramen in a large pot with a big electric bucket heater. He dashes over to the window and looks out, but is disappointed and walks back over to the

cooking food. He turns around again and dashes back over to the window, but is disappointed again.

EXT. GUY'S WINDOW-LATE AFTERNOON

GUY pulls back the curtain, then retreating, then pulls it back again.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT-LATE AFTERNOON

Cut to SANDRA walking across the parking lot from the motel office. She walks up to GUY's door and knocks. GUY immediately opens it.

GUY
Well, hello!

SANDRA
Did you take my laptop?

GUY
Your lap-? Of course not!

SANDRA
Did you pack it in the car this morning?

GUY
Yess.

SANDRA
It's not in there.

GUY
I bet it is.

SANDRA hold up a room key.

SANDRA
I hope it's in the room.

SANDRA walks over to her room's door and opens it. She walks inside.

INT. SANDRA'S ROOM-LATE AFTERNOON.

SANDRA looks all around her room. She looks under the bed, but it isn't there. She looks toward the doorway and yells for GUY.

SANDRA

Where did you put it?

GUY is suddenly sitting on the bed behind her. He startles SANDRA when he speaks.

GUY

I put it in the car.

SANDRA

(Startled.)

Don't do that!

GUY

(Sheepishly.)

Okay.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT--LATE AFTERNOON.

SANDRA and GUY walk out to her car while talking. The stop at the trunk.

GUY

All I know is, I put it in your trunk.

SANDRA

Well it wasn't there a little while ago.

GUY

That is so odd. It's probably those same bastards who let the air out of your tires.

SANDRA hold up her hand to silence him.

SANDRA

Stop! I can't handle that kind of talk right now.

SANDRA opens the trunk to her car. A shot from the inside of the trunk reveals SANDRA's dumbfounded face and GUY's happy demeanor. SANDRA simply says nothing and stares. GUY keeps looking back and forth from the trunk to SANDRA.

GUY

(After a long pause.)

Yeah. Right where I put it.

GUY reaches in and takes out the laptop. He hands it to SANDRA. GUY shuts her trunk. SANDRA marches toward her room. GUY trails behind her.

GUY

You must be famished. Well, you're in luck, because—

SANDRA

I have work to do.

SANDRA walks into her door way as GUY speaks.

GUY

(Faux surprise.)

Oh, you're staying here again.

SANDRA turns to GUY.

SANDRA

(Somewhat annoyed.)

Yes!

SANDRA closes the door. GUY stands in front of her doorway for a moment, then gives himself a "thumbs up."

GUY

Perfect!

INT. SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM--EVENING

SANDRA is practicing her presentation before the assembly.

SANDRA

And, it's clear that this bill not only will save lives, but will generate as much as two-hundred-and-forty-eight million dollars by twenty-fifty-five. Revenue that is clearly needed by the state to fund schools and pay for roads and bridges. It's also a matter of

national security. Mr. Speaker, I think the Mandatory Headlight to Save the People and Pets Act is what most would call a "no-brainer." It's good for the people of our state and it's good for . . . all sorts of other things.

She sighs and puts down her notes. She stretches and heads to her door. She opens it.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING AREA--NIGHT

She steps out and walks over to GUY's door and knocks. There's no answer, but she hears a loud whistle and turns around. GUY is standing under the motel sign. He has set up a picnic beneath the sign.

GUY

Hello there State Representative
Sandra-what's your last name?

SANDRA walks over to the picnic.

SANDRA

It's Perchowznik. But, let's just forget about my title and my last name for a minute, okay?

GUY

Sure.

SANDRA

What are you doing?

GUY

(Almost becoming nervous.)

I-I made too much ramen, so I thought I'd . . .

(Beat.)

Would you like some ramen?

SANDRA

Okay. Sure.

GUY

Okay, then. You can Sit down.

SANDRA sits down. GUY starts to dish out a bowl for her.

GUY (CONT'D)

Hey, how was your meeting this morning?

SANDRA

Oh—it was so, so great. Bio-compatible pesticides. Love it.

GUY

Are you a pesticide girl?

SANDRA

As a matter of fact pesticides are a big deal where I'm from, as I'm finding out.

GUY

Yeah? So what's going on with them?

SANDRA

(Long sigh.)

To be honest, I already had four hours of pesticide talk today. It's poison. Anything else you absolutely must know, I'll tell you tomorrow.

GUY

Tomorrow. Okay, I'm holding you to that.

SANDRA

The ramen looks good.

SANDRA starts to eat.

GUY

Thanks. I have my own recipe. I add summer sausage.

SANDRA

Yeah, it's good.

GUY

I also make ramen with scrambled eggs for breakfast sometimes.

SANDRA

Uh-huh.

GUY

And ramen with mulberries for
dessert.

SANDRA

That's very creative.

GUY

I couldn't find any mulberry trees
around here. I don't know what the
deal is.

SANDRA

I'm sure it's the pesticides.

GUY

Hmm.

SANDRA stops eating and looks at him. He has a
thoughtful look on his face. She waves her hand in front
of him.

SANDRA

You do know that other people can
make jokes, too, right?

GUY

Oh yeah. I know.

SANDRA

It would be polite to laugh.

SANDRA cracks a smile. GUY looks confused.

SANDRA

Okay. You're funnier than I am. In
a strange way.

GUY

Thank you.

GUY tries very hard to figure out what he did that was
funny.

GUY (CONT)

What did I do?

SANDRA

(Laughing.)

See, it's stuff like that. I love that. It takes my mind off the capitol.

GUY

Well, I'm happy to help.

She takes a bite and tries to change the subject.

SANDRA

Oh, speaking of the capitol--

GUY

--which you don't want to do.

SANDRA

Well, now I do.

GUY

Sounds good.

SANDRA

I get to present my first bill on the House floor tomorrow! Yay!

GUY

Hey, that's great! What's the bill about?

SANDRA

It's very simple. It requires all drivers to turn their headlights on whenever they order and purchase fast food at any drive-thru within state lines--even during the day.

GUY

Oh. Is that important?

SANDRA

Ask my kitty. Oh, wait—you can't because she got run over by some jackass who didn't see her when she accidentally jumped out our car window when we went through a Chuckleburger's drive through in Blodgett seventeen years ago.

GUY

Oh. Shessh, I'm sorry.

SANDRA

She was a Ukraine kitty. She didn't understand drive-thrus. My father barely understood them.

GUY

Yeah, that's something you don't really ever think about.

SANDRA

I know Stuffy's Law won't solve every drive-thru problem we have, but we need to start somewhere.

GUY

Heck yeah!

SANDRA

I got the halogen industry on my side.

GUY

That's big, right?

SANDRA

I think so.

(Beat.)

And, thanks to Gresham, it got out of committee—

GUY

What's Gresham?

SANDRA

Representative Gresham. He supported it, but now he's backing off all of the sudden.

GUY

Why?

SANDRA

He's a twit. Now halogen lobby says they're out of money. And I don't have the votes--and of course the fast food industry hates the bill.

GUY

Why?

SANDRA

They're scared, obviously. Don't you think more people would be attracted to a drive-thru if they saw a bunch of headlights on?

GUY

Absolutely.

SANDRA

Good for business, right.

GUY

Yeah.

SANDRA

The coffee shop I manage in Abagail-- it has a little drive thru window. And I insist that customers turn their headlights on. And you know what? Nobody complains. In fact, I've got everybody in town trained pretty well.

GUY

See, that's great, and--

SANDRA

It's this close to becoming a reality for me. And it's this close to being a lost cause.

GUY

Why don't' you filibuster?

SANDRA

We don't have a filibuster procedure in the state house. And, you use a filibuster to stop a piece of legislation--not to advance it.

(Beat.)

Sorry, I'm not trying to be a know-it-all--

GUY

No, that's awesome you know stuff like that.

SANDRA

Believe me, I didn't know any of this before I got appointed.

GUY

You got appointed? So, you didn't get elected?

SANDRA

Are you kidding? Nobody'd elect me for this job.

(Beat.)

No, our old state rep--Frank Eglinton--he used to come into the coffee shop and we'd chat. He's a nice old guy--kind of like the grandfather you wish you had instead of the mean, drunk old bastard you ended up with.

(Beat.)

Anyway, whenever he came in, he'd fill me in on how all this government stuff actually works--probably because I pretended to be interested--which

is a skill that's coming in handy for me now, by the way.

SANDRA takes another bite and seems to forget she's telling a story.

GUY

(Prompting.)

And this nice old guy?

SANDRA

He had a stroke back in March, and— you know, he's getting better and everything, but he said he's done with politics and for some whacked-out reason, he specifically requested that they appoint me to take his place.

GUY

Really?

SANDRA

Yeah. People were pissed, too. For every reason you could imagine: she's got no experience; her husband owes me money; her coffee sucks. You know, I was secretary for the Abigail Chamber of Commerce for two years, so whatever.

GUY

Huh. Is anybody helping you at all?

SANDRA

I do have a legislative aide I inherited from Frank. She works in my office in Abigail.

GUY

That's pretty cool.

SANDRA

Yeah, but she's eighty-seven years old and can only work three hours a day.

GUY

Oh.

SANDRA

Yeah. She's so sweet, though, oh my God. She tried to send me a text on her old rotary phone.

GUY

Wow.

(Thinking.)

What's a text?

SANDRA lies down on the blanket under the sign. GUY lies down, too, but then sits back up to talk. Then he lies down again. Then he sits back up to talk. Then he lies back down again, instead. Finally, he sits up part way.

GUY

(Cautiously.)

So, you know that thing? That thing that took place yesterday? Last night yesterday? The thing with you . . . and also with me?

SANDRA

(With eyes shut.)

Mmm-hmm.

GUY

Well, so, you know just for my own purposes of--kinda planning ahead and things like that--I'm just trying to gauge whether or not I should figure on something along those lines taking place again tonight.

SANDRA

Hmmm, probably not.

GUY

Sure. That's totally fine. I was just checking.

(Pause while thinking.)

Is it because you like your husband?

SANDRA

I don't want to talk about my husband.

GUY

Oh. Are you guys separated?

SANDRA

Well, I'm here and he's not, so at the moment we're technically separated. But, I don't want to talk about my husband.

GUY

Where is he?

SANDRA

He's on a metal detecting expedition in Arkansas. I don't want to talk about my husband.

GUY

Yeah, I'm sorry. Is he cool?

SANDRA

(Sighs.)

Yes, he's so very, very, cool.

GUY

(Thinks.)

Alright, you don't want to talk about him.

GUY lies back down.

SANDRA

Thank you.

FADE OUT

INT--MORNING--GUY'S MOTEL ROOM

GUY wakes up in his bed. He stretches and climbs out in a merry mood. He puts on a robe and opens his door and steps outside.

EXT. FRONT OF MOTEL DOORS--MORNING

GUY steps outside and immediately freezes in utter panic. SANDRA's car is not in the parking lot. He rushes over to her door and starts knocking on it. He knocks continuously for 30 seconds. When he stops, he cups his hands around his mouth to call into the room.

GUY

(Almost meekly.)

Hello?

GUY knocks again, but for not as long. He gives up and slides down her door until he is sitting on the ground. For a moment he does nothing. Then he starts swatting himself on the head with his robe-tie. He stops and starts speaking to it.

GUY

Well, robe-tying thing, looks like she's gone. Maybe forever. What do I do? I should go do some fundraising, but I know I'd be extra pathetic at it today.

INT. GUY'S MOTEL ROOM--DAY

GUY is getting ready for the day. He's still carrying around the robe-tie so he can talk to it.

GUY

I should really write a sad song about how sad I am, but I'm more freaked out than sad at the moment, so I know the song won't come out right.

GUY picks up his tire pump to speak to it.

GUY

But, you and I--we have a lot of work to do later, okay?

GUY is back to getting ready and talking to the robe-tie.

GUY

I gotta do something. I gotta be
able to make some sort of freak-out
art.

INT. GUY'S MOTEL BATHROOM--DAY

GUY brushes his teeth, spits and speaks again to the
robe-tie.

GUY

And, no offense, but I really hate
talking to inanimate objects.

(to his toothbrush.)

That goes for you, too.

(Yelling into the other room.)

And even you, tire pump!

EXT. BACK OF RESTAURANT--DAY

GUY stakes out a pizza restaurant and examines their
dumpster. We see him stuff several round cardboard pizza
bottoms into his duffel bag.

EXT. ALLEY--DAY

GUY swipes a can of spray paint from a teen when he isn't
looking.

INT. FLOOR OF STATE HOUSE--DAY

SANDRA is presenting her bill before the legislature.
She is speaking into her microphone. While she speaks,
unidentified people in suits and dresses keep walking
around in front and behind her. The place is loud. Lost
of people are talking.

SANDRA

And, so Stuffy's law will make this a
thing of the past. It-it will make
the people of this state, and the
fine people from out of state who
visit our fast food restaurants-it
will make these people safe. You,
I've heard some concerns-and, believe
me I can understand that-and I know
there will be a period of time when
people are getting used to it. But
the main thing is it will not

restrict us in any way. In fact it will free us; it will make us free from worry and concern as we go through drive-thrus anywhere in the state—from North Oak Falls Beach to New Portugal.

EXT. CAPITOL STEPS--DAY

SANDRA and GRESHAM are walking down the steps. She seems giddy.

SANDRA

It would have been great if people had actually been listening to what I was saying.

GRESHAM

They voted for it and that's all that matters.

SANDRA

Oh, no, I'm really excited about it. I just hope that whenever they actually read it they'll vote for it again.

GRESHAM

(Tactfully.)

Oh, yeah. Of course. The speaker's okay with it, and that's the main thing.

SANDRA

Thank you for that.

GRESHAM

No, it's my job. We have to work together and help each other out. Right?

SANDRA

Right.

GRESHAM

So . . . how about it?

SANDRA

How about it?

(With realization.)

Oh no! No. C'mon don't do this.

GRESHAM

Hold on a minute. You just agreed a second ago that we need to help each other out, right?

SANDRA

Yeah.

GRESHAM

And I put my stellar reputation out there to help you get this thing on the schedule and get it through the first reading, right?

SANDRA

You're saying you only did it to barter with me?

GRESHAM

No, of course not. I think you've got a great talent and I want to help you focus it. So, now it's time to use your talent, take my advice, and play ball.

SANDRA

Look, I'm not bought and paid for, okay? Not by you, or the halogen lobby, or the coffee filter industry, or metal detecting associations. I have my own set of rules that I play by. And I do what I think is right.

GRESHAM

Well, guess what, this is the right thing to do.

SANDRA

It's not even your bill. Why do you care so much?

GRESHAM

It's my job to get the votes—you know that. I got the votes for your bill, didn't I?

SANDRA starts to walk away.

SANDRA

Sorry, I'm not a sell-out.

GRESHAM

(Yelling.)

They're just solar panels on a school roof! Why are you so against this?

(Beat.)

Where are you going?

(Beat.)

Are you coming back?

(Beat.)

Are you gonna answer me at all?

INT. GUY'S ROOM—AFTERNOON

From the window in GUY's room we see SANDRA peeking in, looking for GUY.

EXT. FRONT OF MOTEL—AFTERNOON

GUY is sauntering back towards his motel room carrying his duffel bag. He is looking down and doesn't notice SANDRA standing there looking in his window. SANDRA turns around and sees GUY walking toward his room and smiles. GUY still looks down as he gets his key out and unlocks his door. He walks in, still not noticing SANDRA.

INT. GUY'S MOTEL ROOM—AFTERNOON

GUY sets his duffel bag down. He picks up his tire pump.

GUY

I don't know, pump. I feel a sad song coming on.

GUY looks over to the window and sees SANDRA there looking in and waving at him. He tosses the pump over his shoulder and stands up.

GUY

Never mind. I think I feel a happy song coming on.

He walks over to his door and opens it. SANDRA steps into the doorway.

GUY

I thought you were gone forever!

SANDRA

What? Don't start acting weird!

SANDRA steps inside and starts to make herself at home.

GUY

Oh, no. No. I didn't mean to be weird. I'm not weird, really.

SANDRA

What'd you do today? How was fundraising?

GUY

Well, I didn't actually do any fundraising today.

SANDRA

You mean you didn't even try?

GUY

(Confused as to how to answer)
Yes. . . No. I didn't try. I was just in a different sort of mood. So, I painted sixteen pictures instead.

SANDRA

You painted sixteen pictures? Just while I was gone?

GUY

Yes, pretty much.

SANDRA

Are they any good?

GUY

I would say they represent raw
emotion more than artistic technique.

SANDRA

Let me see them.

GUY

You know what's funny is that I
didn't really think you'd be here to
see them. I don't know what you're
gonna say.

SANDRA

Well, you told me about them, so you
must have figured I'd want to take a
look.

GUY

Yeah. Fair enough.

GUY starts to unzip his duffel bag.

GUY (CONT'D)

So, how's your day been going?

SANDRA

It's been pretty good! I had my
first reading on Stuffy's Law, or
Stuffy's Bill right now, I guess.

GUY

How'd it go?

SANDRA

I blew them away.

GUY

I missed you so.

SANDRA

Well, what can I say?

GUY

And, now you came back!

SANDRA
(Whispering)
I'm hiding out.

GUY
So, we're back on track.

SANDRA
So, you don't have to pout!

GUY
It's great to be wrong!

SANDRA
Are we starting to rhyme?

GUY
Do you feel a song?

SANDRA
No. But, give me time.

GUY
Just start singing—the music follows.

SANDRA
I can't think of anything that
rhymes—but "swallows."

GUY
Now, is the music swelling in your
head?

SANDRA
No, it's not. Do you think I'm dead?

GUY
Let me check your pulse. No, you're
not even fainting.

SANDRA
Okay. Enough of this stuff. Let's
check out your painting.

GUY takes out several round pizza bottoms and begins to
pass them one-by-one to SANDRA as he sings.

GUY

Well—

*This one's a sad one.
This one's a bad one.
This one's a cross between the two.*

*This one's like sunshine.
This more like gun-shine.
Still, I think none shine more than you.*

*This is just some spray paint
Dropping from the sky.
Falling just like I might do.*

*So, this one is sappy.
And this one is happy.
Mostly 'cause I met you.*

GUY sits down next to SANDRA.

SANDRA

These are great. But, they all look like variations on the letters "OK."

GUY

Right. I decided I would convince myself that everything was going to be okay no matter what.

SANDRA

Ah, okay.

GUY

Are you hearing the music in your head?

SANDRA

Mmm, no.

GUY

How 'bout now?

SANDRA

Not exactly.

GUY
How 'bout now?

SANDRA
(To shut him up.)
Yes, definitely.

GUY
Excellent. I can do the verse now.

SANDRA
What'd you just do?

GUY
That was a chorus.

SANDRA
You did the chorus first, and now the
verse?

GUY
Yep. I like to mix it up a bit.
Mess with people's minds.

SANDRA
Great.

GUY
No, I'm kidding. They've been doing
it that way for years.

SANDRA
Ah, good to know.

GUY
Yep.—

*How boring it must be
To not be you and me,
And stare at all the stars
Everyone else can see.*

*I wouldn't be impressed.
I think we've got it best.
Who cares for fancy cars
Or other luxury?*

SANDRA

(Joining in.)

*But, think back now, if you can
To when this whole thing began!*

GUY

(New chorus.)

*It was a grey day.
My "keep away" day
But, turned out bright
The night we met.*

You were the shy one.

SANDRA

You were the sly one.

GUY

I'm glad that I won.

SANDRA

Hmm? I bet!

GUY

*Even as we speak I feel I'm getting weak.
Stumbling like a freak,
And yet . . .*

GUY AND SANDRA

*How I would give it
All to relive it—
Your smile
The night we met.*

SANDRA

*But, you realize we didn't meet at
night.*

GUY

If you want to be technical about it.

SANDRA

And I don't.

GUY

It just fits the song better.

SANDRA

Yes, I agree.

They both stand up and start to dance around the motel room like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, except without the formalwear, large accommodating sets, or beautiful choreography. They dance through one more chorus of the song, making use of any inch of space they can find in the cramped room.

After they stop dancing, SANDRA sits down on the end of the bed and gently taps the side of her head. GUY starts stacking up his pizza bottom paintings.

SANDRA

Wow, that was trippy.

GUY

Hey, do you know anyone who plays Frisbee golf and might want these?

SANDRA

What, your paintings?

GUY

Yeah.

SANDRA

Don't get rid of your paintings.

GUY

Well, I don't need 'em for anything.

SANDRA

Yeah, but they're art. Other people out there might need them. Why am I explaining this to you? You're the wandering arts guy.

GUY

I don't think they're really gonna end up in an art institute somewhere.

SANDRA

So give them to people. When somebody gives you a tip, you can

give them a painting. That's good business sense there.

GUY

No, I'm afraid to do that. When I bring in zero donations then I'll blame it on my paintings and not on the fact that it was an empty dirt road on a Tuesday afternoon.

SANDRA

You know what we did in Abagail? Two years ago, we had these sculptures that looked like carrots all over town. And they were painted different ways by all these different artists. I had one in front of the coffee shop. It was a carrot laying down on a sofa and the green tassel thing on top was pink and the rest of the carrot was painted blue and white to look like the flag of Finland or whatever.

GUY

Was it cool?

SANDRA

No, it was really stupid. The whole thing was stupid, but it did bring people into town who then walked around and looked at these different colored carrots. And I sold a lot of coffee.

GUY

Hmm.

SANDRA

So, let's go do that with your paintings.

GUY

You think?

SANDRA

Yeah! Let's just put them all over town so people can see them.

GUY

What if people just throw them away?

SANDRA

You were going to throw them away, weren't you?

GUY

Or what if it rains?

SANDRA

Again—you were going to throw them away. Let's set them free and let fate take its course.

GUY

What if people hate them?

SANDRA

Screw the people. Let's go.

**MONTAGE—INT AND EXT--SANDRA AND GUY LEAVING PIZZA BOX
PAINTINGS ALL OVER TOWN**

This is just the funnest darned afternoon of their lives.

They hang one on a window of a house.

They leave one on a Porta-John.

They enter an office building. Unbeknownst to SANDRA, GUY takes out a hammer and nail from his bag and starts nailing the painting to a wall. It is very loud and SANDRA quickly turns around to silence him.

They put one on a No Trespassing fence.

Eventually they venture out far into an open prairie.

EXT. OPEN PRAIRIE—EARLY EVENING

SANDRA is looking at her cell phone while GUY comes back from dropping off a painting.

GUY

What is it?

SANDRA

(Shaking her head, but not looking up)
No-it's just from my husband.

GUY

Oh. What's he want?

SANDRA

He doesn't want anything. He's just saying hi.

GUY

You like my hanging job.

SANDRA

(Gazing afar)
Oh, yes. I do like it.

GUY

This is where I was thinking about doing my time travel.

SANDRA

Where?

GUY

Right out here in the middle of nowhere. Probably over by those trees. So, if a bunch of punk kids come out here, they won't notice me.

SANDRA

Why out here?

GUY

Well, if I go back in time I'd kind of like to know what I'm gonna be dropping into. This'd just be prairie grass, so it shouldn't be a problem.

SANDRA

When are you going to do this?

GUY

Well, first of course I'd have to
invent the time machine. But,
actually, I've abandoned the whole
project.

SANDRA

Really?

GUY

Yeah. I pretty much wasted one whole
minute of your life just now.

SANDRA pats him on the shoulder. She walks away. GUY
gently caresses the shoulder she touched. He turns and
follows her like a puppy dog as they continue walking.

GUY

So, this was fun, huh?

SANDRA

Yeah, it was. Although, I'm feeling
super-guilty about not being down in
the capitol.

GUY

The whole week's been fun--and it's
only been like two days.

SANDRA

Yeah, I know. The real world's gonna
catch up to us pretty soon I think.

INT. SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM--NIGHT

SANDRA and GUY are playing checkers and eating
individually wrapped saltine crackers.

SANDRA

King me, please. . . . And, stop
looking at me like that.

Cut to GUY who has a blushing love-struck grimace.

GUY

How am I looking at you?

SANDRA

You know how you're looking at me.
You better stop it.

GUY

You took what I thought was going to
be a terrible day, and turned it into
something wonderful.

SANDRA

Yes, okay. Are you going to king me?

GUY

You bet I am!

SANDRA

That really sounded weird.

GUY

Sorry, it's just exciting—hanging up
paintings, playing checkers, having
an affair with a state
representative—

SANDRA

We are not having an affair!

GUY

What? We are too having an affair!

SANDRA

No we're not.

GUY

Well, I say we are.

SANDRA

Playing checkers and hanging up
paintings and eating ramen noodles
under a big sign does not make an
affair.

GUY

(Sing-songy.)

You're leaving something out!

SANDRA stops to put her words together.

SANDRA
I was feeling drunk and devilish.

GUY
That's okay. That's fine with me.

SANDRA
You know we're just friends. I made
that pretty clear . . .
(Calculating in her head)
yesterday.

(Beat.)
You know I have to go back home—and
that means to my husband, too, when
the session breaks.

(Beat.)
It's your move, by the way.

GUY
Is it?

SANDRA
Yes. And, quit acting like you're
lost in some other world.

SANDRA's cell phone rings. She answers it. GUY moves
some checker pieces.

SANDRA
Hello?
(Long, long, long, long beat.)
Fuck off.

SANDRA Hangs up and looks at the checker board.

SANDRA
King me again. See you're not even
trying. If I acted all disoriented
like that when I was speaking on the
chamber floor today, do you think I
would have gotten one single vote?

GUY
Who was that?

SANDRA

Who was what?

GUY

On the phone.

(Excited.)

Was it your husband?

SANDRA

What? No! It was some tool from the Speaker's office. They're trying to twist my arm on this idiotic bill to put solar panels on the schools in Carbon Heights.

GUY

Solar panels? That's not so bad.

SANDRA

Oh, I'm sorry--do you know all the details of the bill?

GUY

Well no, obviously. I've heard good things about solar panels though.

SANDRA

How many vaudeville houses used solar panels?

GUY

Probably none.

SANDRA

Exactly. And if you think I'm going to vote to give that piss-ant little Carbon Heights school solar panels you're--King me, please.

(Beat.)

I see you've stopped looking at me like that.

GUY

I'm not doing anything, honest.

SANDRA

Okay, then, Mr. I Love Solar Panels.

SANDRA pulls out her laptop, clicks, and types in some words.

SANDRA

Here--read the bill and then you can tell me how wonderful it is. I just won, by the way.

SANDRA gets up and walks off to change into sleepwear.

GUY

(Amazed at the laptop.)

Oh, you can see all the bills right here! Cool.

SANDRA is in the bathroom, performing her bedtime rituals.

SANDRA

That's the magic of the internet.

GUY

What am I looking for?

SANDRA

H-B Four Seventeen. The "let's put solar panels on an eight-hundred year-old school building so we can act like heroes and waste a lot of money act."

GUY

Yeah, I think I see it. Different name, though.

SANDRA

Pathetic, right?

GUY

Well, just gimme a minute to read it.

(Beat.)

Or maybe an hour.

SANDRA comes out of the bathroom and climbs into her bed.

SANDRA
Alright, take all the time you need.
I figured it out in the first three
sentences, though.

SANDRA lays her head on the pillow and closes her eyes.

GUY
(Reading the laptop.)
Hmm.

SANDRA opens one eye, but when nothing else happens, she closes it. She falls asleep. GUY keeps reading. He reads until sunrise.

INT. SANDRA'S MOTEL ROOM--MORNING

SANDRA sits up in the bed. She sees GUY still looking at her laptop.

SANDRA
Were you on there all night long?

GUY
Yeah.

SANDRA
You're not dating someone on there
are you?

GUY
No, I found some interesting stuff.

SANDRA
Interesting stuff about solar panels?

GUY
No, no. I gave up on that one pretty
quickly.

SANDRA
Stupidest thing you've ever read,
right?

GUY
Well.

(Deciding to avoid an argument.)
Yes . . . But, after that I found
your bill.

SANDRA
Mm-hmm! Nice piece of work, isn't
it?

GUY
Sure, sure. It took me a long time
to read it—and especially to
understand it.

SANDRA
I see.

GUY
In fact, I think it's gotta be easier
to build a time machine than to
understand the legislative process.

SANDRA
Right.

GUY
But, anyway—maybe you already know
this, but people have added a bunch
of kind of odd amendments to the
bill.

SANDRA climbs out of bed and rushes over to the laptop.

SANDRA
Ammendments? Who did?

GUY
A bunch of different people. See.
They were all added last night.

SANDRA reads the laptop screen for a moment then smacks
GUY on the shoulder.

SANDRA
When I was here goofing off with you!
Instead of working for my
constituents! Now, they're trying to
screw me over!

SANDRA rushes to the bathroom get dressed.

GUY
You know--and, I hate to even bring
this up--

SANDRA
(In a Hurry)
What?

GUY
It may have had something to do with
you lobbing that eff-bomb at that guy
on the phone.

SANDRA steps out of the bathroom and glares at GUY.

GUY
I mean probably not, but it was just
a thought I had.

SANDRA
Based on what?

GUY
Uh--not much. Pretty flimsy
circumstantial stuff, really.

SANDRA
Like what?

GUY
Mostly, it's because the amendments
weren't there when I started reading
the bill. And, then they just showed
up in the middle of the night. You
know, like an hour or so after you
got off the phone with that "tool."

She walks back into the bathroom.

SANDRA
Phhh.

GUY

(Calling to her in the bathroom.)

Can I help you in some way?

No response from her.

GUY

I can make the coffee.

SANDRA rushes out of the bathroom.

SANDRA

No! I'll make the coffee.

SANDRA heads to the coffee maker and starts to grind up coffee beans. GUY watches her intently. She looks over at him.

SANDRA

Go do something, please—like pack up my laptop.

(Thinks.)

No. Stay away from my laptop.

SANDRA freaks out a bit while trying to make the coffee. GUY slowly backs away from her.

GUY

I'm gonna go see how my room is doing.

SANDRA

Yes, you go do that.

GUY backs out of the room and leaves through the door.

INT. GUY'S MOTEL ROOM--MORNING

GUY mopes around his room trying to think of a way to help. He looks out his window.

INT. SANDRA'S ROOM--MORNING

SANDRA is now dressed and ready to go. She grabs her laptop bag and heads for the door. She opens the door and is startled to see Rep. GRESHAM standing in front of her room.

SANDRA

Oh, Jesus! What are you doing here?

GRESHAM

What I'm doing is completely wasting my time by driving up to this po-dunk town just to find you.

EXT. FRONT OF MOTEL--MORNING

SANDRA steps out of her room and onto the sidewalk.

SANDRA

I'm allowed to be here.

GRESHAM

(Sighs.)

No. . . . actually, you're not.
We're in session. You need to be down there doing your job.

SANDRA

My job does not include being bullied into voting for solar panels when I have a very strong conscientious objection to them.

GRESHAM

Okay, let's just put aside this weird thing you have against solar panels for a minute. Nobody is bullying you. It's about negotiation.

SANDRA glares at him.

GRESHAM (CONT'D)

What?

SANDRA

Don't act like you don't know! You had to have been there when they did it.

GRESHAM

Okay, hang on, okay? There's a whole lot of stuff that goes on here all the time that I gotta keep track of.

SANDRA

The amendments?

GRESHAM

Oh yeah. I tried to warn you about that kind of hardball.

SANDRA

Why'd you do that?

GRESHAM

I didn't do it. There's a whole mess of people higher up than me.

SANDRA

It'll never pass with those ridiculous amendments.

GRESHAM

And that's why they did it.

SANDRA

Requiring drive-thru menus to be posted in Cantonese? And, what's with the stickers that have to be put on vacuum cleaners? That has nothing to do with drive-thru restaurants at all.

GRESHAM

You've got a lot to learn Ms. Perchowznik. I really don't know why Henry wanted you to take his place. I mean you're a nice person, mostly, and you're really passionate about a few really specific things. But, you gotta learn compromise.

SANDRA notices GUY peeking out his door.

SANDRA

Right. Yes, I know.

GRESHAM

Who's that guy behind me peeking out his door? He looks like he knows you.

SANDRA

Um.

GRESHAM

Go get him!

SANDRA walks over to the door where GUY thinks he isn't being noticed. Without dialogue, we see SANDRA and GUY having a spirited discussion. GUY seems optimistic, while SANDRA seems ticked off. GUY comes outside and they both walk back over to GRESHAM.

GUY

It's a pleasure to meet you Deputy House Majority Whip Representative Gresham.

GRESHAM

Yeah, hey, you know, any friend of Sandra's . . .

GRESHAM looks to SANDRA for some guidance.

SANDRA

Yeah, he's um—he's staying in the room next door.

GRESHAM

Great! Excellent.

GUY

You gotta try some of Representative Perchowznik's coffee.

SANDRA

(To GRESHAM)

No, he doesn't mean--

GRESHAM

(Checking his watch.)

Her coffee? You know, I'd love to, but it's a long ride up here and it's gonna be a long ride back—

GUY

And, that is the perfect reason to have a nice, soothing, perfectly blended, freshly roasted cup of coffee.

GRESHAM

Alright, you sold me. Where we going?

GUY points to SANDRA's room.

GUY

Right in here.

SANDRA, GUY, and GRESHAM start to walk into the room.

GRESHAM

Oh, so you've been here and had coffee before? Interesting!

INT. SANDRA'S ROOM--DAY

They walk into the room. GRESHAM sits at the table. He sets his things on the table, too. GUY motions for SANDRA to stop trying to serve the coffee and to just sit down. He pulls out her chair. GRESHAM checks some email messages on smartphone. Soon, GUY brings over a tray with a coffee pot, three cups, and cream and sugar. He sets the tray down on the table, perilously close to a few of GRESHAM's papers. GRESHAM reaches for the papers.

GRESHAM

Woah, woah!

GUY lifts up the tray until the papers are gone, then he sets it back down.

GRESHAM

All right, let's try some of that coffee!

GUY tries to pour the coffee but SANDRA intervenes. GUY continues to try to help while speaking.

GUY

You're gonna like this, I know.

GRESHAM

Yeah?

GUY

Yeah. I mean, if you like coffee.

GRESHAM

I like coffee.

GUY

She's great at it.

GRESHAM

(As he takes a cup from SANDRA)

Really?

GUY

Yeah. It's been the best week of my life for coffee.

GRESHAM takes a sip.

GRESHAM

(With piqued interest.)

Best week? So, are—it is really good by the way--are you two—um—a couple?

SANDRA

No!

GUY

Well . . .

SANDRA

(To GUY)

No!

GUY

(Secretly whispering to GRESHAM.)

Kind of.

GRESHAM

Yeah, well, either way.

GRESHAM takes another drink.

GRESHAM

Hey, Buddy, what do you think about solar panels?

GUY

(Looks down at his coffee cup.)
Boy, I really hate them.

GRESHAM

(Baffled.)
So . . .why?

GUY

(Grasping.)
Call me old fashioned!

GRESHAM takes another sip.

GRESHAM

Interesting.
(Beat.)
A lot of interesting stuff here.

GRESHAM puts down his coffee cup and stands up.

GRESHAM

(Definitively.)
Okay, I got to get back and do some real deputy whipping.

SANDRA

How about my bill? Are you going to get those amendments out?

GRESHAM

Sandra, I think you're great. I think you're the Bee's Knees and all that, okay?

GUY

I like that Bee's Knees reference.

GRESHAM

(To GUY.)
Thank you.

(To SANDRA.)

But, you are stubborn, and you're going to go down in flames defending a bill ninety-nine percent of the assembly thinks is a joke.

SANDRA

What do I need to do?

GRESHAM

For starters, vote yes on the damned solar panels!

SANDRA

Arghhh! Don't do that to me!

GRESHAM

Like I said—it's about compromise.

SANDRA

Some things are above compromise. Some things are worth . . . charging head-on into a field full of soldiers with swords and spears because it's that important.

GUY unzips his backpack and pulls out his tire pump.
SANDRA notices this.

SANDRA

Stuffy was that important to me. I believe that if the car behind us at the Chuckleburger's in Fort Madison would have turned on their goddamn headlights in the drive-thru, they would have seen me drop him out of the window, and he would be sitting my shelf today . . . and not in some godforsaken landfill.

GRESHAM

Wait.

(Confused and annoyed.)

Stuffy was a stuffed animal?

SANDRA

Yes.

GRESHAM

He wasn't even a real cat?

SANDRA

He was a real kitty to me.

GRESHAM

Wha—are you kidding me?

SANDRA

His name was Stuffy. I thought that made it pretty obvious.

GRESHAM

Oh my g—I can handle a lot of things, but not this.

SANDRA

It doesn't change anything. If it happened to a stuffed animal it could happen to a real animal. It could happen to a real child.

SANDRA starts to pace around as she thinks. She stops in front of GRESHAM.

SANDRA

(Solemnly.)

I would argue that it already did happen to a real child.

GRESHAM

Huh?

SANDRA

Do you hear the music?

GRESHAM

Music?

SANDRA

In your head?

GRESHAM

In my head?

GUY

I do. Kind of a nice soft piano
thing?

SANDRA

Yeah, yeah!

SANDRA positions herself like she is on stage as a vamp
is playing.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I have a story to tell you. It's a
sad story, but it's true.

*Stuffy was puffy
And he loved to dance.
It was never enough--
He didn't stand a chance.*

*The kitty was flitty
And he loved to roam.
It was too much to sit--
He was full of fun foam.*

*But, a ride in the car
Would make him feel pinned, oh!
My claustrophobe cat
Jumped right out the window.*

*With tears in my eyes,
And a burger and fried,
Stuffy my fluffy friend
Said his goodbyes.*

Rep. GRESHAM starts to tear up.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

*Daddy was mad, he
Had no time to waste.
It was too much to pay.
The food had no taste.*

*Mommy and Tommy
Said "Sandra, be brave!
Remember last year?
We lived in a cave."*

*But, I had to go back
And to rescue my buddy.
Would his head be all squashed?
Would his paws be all muddy?*

*Oh, I should have stopped him.
Okay, so I dropped him.
But, Stuffy was gone—
He'd withdrawn to the sky!*

GUY joins SANDRA on the "stage."

GUY

You out there in the audience—I bet
you have a story like this, too.
Don't you?

GRESHAM

(Trying not to be emotional.)

Yes.

GUY

Yes?

GRESHAM

Yes.

GUY

And, do you ever want to see another
little girl feel the pain you felt,
or Representative Perchowznik felt?

SANDRA

I've felt a lot of pain over the
years.

GRESHAM

No.

GUY

Well, it doesn't have to be like
that, does it?

SANDRA

No, it doesn't.

GUY

No, it doesn't have to be like that!

*There's no need to be blue
For the things you say and do,
When it doesn't have to be like that.*

SANDRA

*It's pointless to insist
That you sit and slit your wrist
When it doesn't have to be like that!*

SANDRA AND GUY

*So many times it seems the sky is falling.
Have you ever thought to prop it up?
Of all the things in life I find appalling,
The worst is shedding tears to fill your cup.*

GUY

*You can sit and watch TV,
And just mumble "C'est la vie."
But it doesn't have to be like that.*

SANDRA

*You can take the easy cash.
Add another to your stash,
But, it doesn't have to be like that.*

SANDRA AND GUY

*It's hard to stand up, yes, and do the right thing.
But, at least you're never wandering hand-in-hat!
So, talk to all your minions.
And, deliver your opinions.
'Cause, it doesn't have to be like that!*

When the performance is over GRESHAM claps and stands up.

GRESHAM

*Damn! Good coffee, good music. What
a day! I'm pumped. I'm pumped.
Really, I'm pumped.*

SANDRA

Oh, that's wonderful!

GRESHAM

And, I'm sorry about your loss all those years ago.

SANDRA

Well, I'm just trying to turn it into a positive somehow, you know?

GRESHAM

And, I'm willing to work with you on the bill.

SANDRA

Yeah?

GRESHAM

Yeah. I'll kill those amendments, get you a second reading ASAP—let's get this thing done!

SANDRA

Excellent!

GRESHAM

But!

SANDRA

What?

GRESHAM

I need—repeat--need you to sign on as a co-sponsor to the Solar Panel Schoolhouse bill.

SANDRA

Oh, c'mon!

GRESHAM

Okay, how about this: we only put half the number of panels on the school as originally proposed.

SANDRA

Half the panels?

GRESHAM

Yep. And you still get everything
you want.

GUY

Can you make bicyclists exempt from
the headlight thing? I don't have
one.

GRESHAM

Talk to her.

SANDRA

Yes, that's fine.

GRESHAM

And, my proposal?

GUY

Do it for Stuffy!

GRESHAM hi-fives GUY behind SANDRA's back.

SANDRA

Ehhh.

(Thinks.)

All right.

GRESHAM

Wooh! Okay. That's more like it.

(Checking his watch again.)

Okay, I'm really late now. I got to
get out of here.

(To SANDRA)

You got stuff to do, too.

(To GUY)

You can do whatever you want.

GUY

Yeah, I got plans.

GRESHAM shakes GUY's hand as they make their way out.

GRESHAM

Great to hear.

(To Sandra, confidentially.)

He's a smart guy.

SANDRA

Mmm-hmm.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT--DAY

SANDRA and GRESHAM walk out into the parking lot. SANDRA stops at her car. GRESHAM heads over to his car. GUY stands back by the building. He waves.

GUY

Bye! Have fun at the capitol.

SANDRA gives a little wave as she gets into her car. GUY watches them pull out and drive away.

FADE OUT

EXT. DESERTED COUNTRY ROAD INTERSECTION--THE NEXT DAY

GUY is standing in the empty intersection again, although he has a small sign with him now that says, "Now Performing-Comic Collecting Money in Deserted Intersection. Tips welcome."

SANDRA's car comes into view behind GUY. He doesn't notice at first, but eventually turns around and sees the car. She slows down and rolls down her window.

SANDRA

Hi!

GUY

Hi.

SANDRA

I almost couldn't find you out here.
I was lost last time and didn't
really remember much about this spot.

GUY

Oh, it's easy. You know the road
that runs in front of the motel?
Well, you take that to the next
street and turn left, and then go-

SANDRA

Yeah, I figured it out, obviously.
But, thanks anyway.

GUY

Yeah, sure.

(Beat.)

So, I guess you stayed all night down there at the capitol, huh?

SANDRA puts the car in park and gets out.

SANDRA

Yeah. I had to. But, we got a lot of things done.

GUY

Oh, good.

SANDRA

Yeah, Stuffy's Bill got a second reading, and it passed-without all those crazy amendments.

GUY

That's good.

SANDRA

And, Gresham watered down the solar panel bill till it was something I could support, so I voted for that.

GUY

Great. Yeah.

(Beat.)

So, what's next?

SANDRA

Well, we have one more reading and vote to go for Stuffy's Bill. And, it still needs to get through the senate. So, it's a process.

GUY

You think it'll make it?

SANDRA

Oh yeah. Gresham said he's got so many naked pictures of legislators he can get anything he wants passed.

GUY

Ha! How about that?

SANDRA

Yep.

GUY

So, where ya going?

SANDRA

I'm going home. We're off for the next two weeks.

GUY

Oh, nice. You can connect with the voters and all that.

SANDRA

Right.

GUY

Did your husband come back from his metal detecting trip?

SANDRA

He'll be back today sometime.

GUY

Uh-huh. You got any kids?

SANDRA

No.

GUY

I never asked you that.

SANDRA

No. No, I don't

Awkward silence.

GUY

That's cool.

SANDRA

So, what are you going to do next?

GUY

Me? Well, I'm gonna stick this out.

SANDRA looks around the landscape.

SANDRA

This? You mean this?

GUY

Yeah. Not just here. But this concept.

SANDRA

How come?

GUY

You inspired me.

SANDRA

No!

GUY

You really did. You stuck to your guns and got what you were after. You didn't give up. This is my idea. It's all my own, and I'm gonna make it work somehow or another.

SANDRA

You're going to starve to death.

GUY

No, I won't.

(Beat.)

Well, even if I do—it's for a purpose.

SANDRA

Are you going to stand out here even when it's twenty below zero?

GUY

(Thinks.)

I hadn't thought about that.

SANDRA

Look, you have good ideas; you just need to focus them a little more.

GUY

Okay, I will. Now, I know you're busy, and, you know, you're also obstructing my performance area.

SANDRA

Oh, sorry.

SANDRA looks around again. The place is dead.

GUY

Yeah, so good luck with everything.

SANDRA

Well, good luck to you.

GUY

I'm gonna make it work!

SANDRA

Yes, I'm sure you will.

GUY

And, whenever I go by a fast food restaurant, and I see they have their headlights on in the drive-thru . .

SANDRA

Just think of Stuffy.

GUY

I never met Stuffy.

SANDRA

True.

GUY

So, I'll think of you instead.

SANDRA

Okay.

SANDRA walks back to her car and gets in. She starts to drive away. GUY waves to her. SANDRA waves back.

GUY

Bye!

The car disappears down the road. GUY stands there staring in the direction of the car for a few moments. He slowly saunters over to the ditch where his bike and duffel bag are sitting. He shoves the tip jar and the sign into the bag.

GUY then pulls up his bike and climbs on it. He pauses for a minute and then begins riding his bike in the opposite direction from SANDRA's car. He, too disappears down the road. The road is empty for a few seconds. Then, we see GUY on his bike quickly coming back towards the camera, traveling in the same direction as SANDRA is going. The bike fills the frame to black.

CUT TO CREDITS.

Several still photographs are displayed during the credits.

1. GUY shaking hands with a man who is probably SANDRA's husband. The man is holding a metal detector in one hand and a beer in the other. SANDRA is in the background looking mortified.
2. On a chalk sign board placed outside of a coffee shop is written the following: "Stuffy's Special-Double Latte with Xtra Foam and Chocolate. Live music by Comic Tire Pump Man--Wed. 8:30-Mid."
3. Cars in a Drive-thru with their headlights on.
4. SANDRA's car with the words "Happy Divorce!" painted on the back window and streamers taped to the roof and trunk.

The End